1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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same moiety is too keen to be overcome by an appeal to moiety solidarity.

Various parts of the ceremonies are used to give expression to the dual division. In the Djungguan ceremony, subsections, when calling up their dead ancestors, are placed in the moiety order; that is, first the four Dua subsections and then the four Yiritja take turns in calling the names and the illustrious deeds of their dead ancestors. At the end of this ceremony, when food is eaten ritualistically, the members of the two groups exchange food. During the Gunabibi only Dua men paint themselves, since it is taboo for Yiritja men so to decorate themselves for this particular ceremony. Dua men, however, cannot construct the great Yer-mer-lin-di totemic emblem, and this duty and privilege devolves upon Yiritja men, in exchange for which service the Dua men present the Yiritja men with food and other presents. The Dua use a round grave post to mark their burial spots or when they wish to erect a monument to the spirit of a newly dead person belonging to their moiety, whereas the coastal Yiritja raise a ceremonial mast for their dead. The Dua use red feather decorations for their Narra ceremonies; the Yiritja use opossum fur.

The totems themselves are largely divided on the basis of the moiety. The list of the clans with their totems, page 30 ff., will show that most clans of one moiety possess their totems in common. There is a considerable regional variation, but the differences are not due to clan divisions. Very occasionally a clan will possess a totem that no other owns, but this is only a temporary condition, for the myth of the two creator women usually is sufficient proof of ownership to other clans, so that in a short time they accept this new totem as their own, provided they belong to the same moiety as the original clan. For example, on the eastern side of Arnhem Land, along the coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria, all of the Dua clan have totems such as a yam stick, old woman, and young woman, while the Dua clans in the west, which center around the Goyder River, are more concerned with a snake and a complex of totems which surround it, and less with the women and their totemic objects. There seems to be an historical basis for this division which will be discussed later.

The Phratry

There is a weak attempt on the part of the Murngin to form groups of clans within the moiety, based on the mythological idea of a common association with a common creator totem or an alleged similarity

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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of language differentiating one group from surrounding groups of clans. This grouping on a phratry basis, by no means general, is very weak and of no great importance.

The Warumeri, Wangurri, Wulkara, and Gwiyamil all call themselves Man-dji-kai (sand fly), supposedly the general name for their several languages. Although there is a considerable dialectic variation among the clans within this group, each claiming a distinct language for itself, they all insist that these languages are similar, and distinct and separate from those of all other clans. Even a cursory examination of the vocabularies shows that this is a rationalization, and once again a use of the linguistic criterion which the native feels he must have to separate peoples as his own or as different. The Kolpa of the Yaernungo tribe on Wessel Island and the Wallamungo of the Burera tribe on Millingimbi in the Crocodile group are sometimes added to the Mandjikai group. The Wallamungo speak a very different language so that one who knew only the Murngin tongue could not understand their language; thus it is impossible for the native to apply his linguistic criterion here as a definition for the phratry solidarity. Here, then, they fall back on their mythological association: in the days of Wongar (when totems walked the earth as men), Barrimundi came from the Wangurri country and tried to go on through to the other clans, but the whale and crayfish totems prevented him; in his efforts to force his way through, he smashed himself into many pieces which flew for many miles and landed in the territories of the other totemic clans in his phratry group and made their totemic water holes.

A Murngin says, "When I am in trouble I remember my ranga (high totem) and I go ask his people for help." What he means is not that he would go to the whole of his moiety, but that he would appeal to members of his phratry, connected with him by a myth which is confined to the clans in the smaller group. This manifestation of phratry solidarity is weak, however, and frequently the people within it are the very ones who are in the most intense disputes. Instead of going to members of his own phratry in a time of crisis, a clansman would be far more likely to appeal to his mother's clan. In other words, his kinship organization is more powerful in directing his actions than is his local organization, since it is the demands the kinship organization makes upon the members of the clan which force the whole group to act, rather than the demands made by the clan organized as a local unit.

Other phratries are the Garl-ba-nuk (catfish) of the Mandelpui and

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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Liaalaomir clans, and the Durili and Ding Ding phratries. The last two named are too nebulous in their composition to give their clan membership. Some informants name all the Dua clans as belonging to both, while others place only part of the eastern local units in these groups.

The phratry in Murngin society represents a weak attempt within the culture to create new and larger groups than the clan to control the intra-moiety antagonisms. It is an expression of the moiety weakness in controlling the antagonisms of the clans within it. The rivalry for women, as well as the other competitions, excites emotions too strong to be suppressed by phratry solidarity. It is only in the clan that one finds sufficient pressure placed on the antagonisms to prevent open war.

There is an interesting association between the Warumeri on one side and the Wawilak of the Ritarngo tribe on the other. The two are seventy-five miles apart, a long distance in this culture; yet according to native accounts the black duck totem is supposed to have lived with and performed certain significant acts for each clan in a mythological period, so they are most friendly. Actually, the two do not compete for women, although belonging to the same moiety; but the clans that lie between these two and belong to their moiety do compete, so that the Wawilak and Warumeri have common enemies and like grievances, and possess a convenient myth as a rallying point to express solidarity when associated in warfare against mutual enemies. This association of the two clans, although of considerable importance in their activities, is unnamed and does not class them as a phratry.

The Tribe

The tribes of northeastern Arnhem Land, of which Murngin is one, are very weak social units, and when measured by the ordinary definitions of what constitutes a tribe fail almost completely. The tribe is not the war-making group. On the contrary, it is usually within it that the most intensive feuds are found. Tribal membership of the clans on the borders of two tribes is uncertain and changing, or the people may sometimes insist that they belong to both tribes. Even clans well toward the center of a tribe's territory will, under certain circumstances, range themselves with another group, as will be seen, as we examine in the following paragraphs the Murngin tribe.

The name Murngin, as stated, is little used, the principle of dual organization being so strong that the moiety names of a particular

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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CHAPTER VI

WARFARE

WARFARE is one of the most important social activities of the Murngin and surrounding tribes. Without it, Murngin society as it is now constituted could not exist. Any social change consequent upon the loss of the trait would demand a decided alteration in the fundamental structures of the civilization. Warfare prevents modifications in the society that would possibly destroy it.

The tribe is not the war-making group in this society, nor is the moiety. Warfare is as likely to occur within these groups as outside them. The clan, the largest social unit without internal armed conflict, is usually the war-making group. The causes leading to warfare are the killing of a clansman by a member of another clan, and interclan rivalry for women. The latter is the usual cause of a killing. Blood vengeance forces further killings. Clans within a moiety are more likely to be fighting, since clans of the opposite exogamic moieties are not in competition for women. An analysis of battles and killings shows this to be true in most cases, but there are a number of instances in which groups belonging to opposite moieties have been in conflict.

Feuds between clans of opposite moieties are more likely to die out for lack of the stimulus provided by competition for women. Such clans are likely to allow a makarata to be held, where blood is ceremonially shed as repayment for the death of a clansman, in order that the feud may be definitely ended.

It seems a probable hypothesis that one of the fundamental reasons for the creation of a phratry is a drive within the civilization to create social structures intermediate in size between moiety and clan, where open conflict would be taboo, as it is now within clan limits. This feeling is not strong enough to counterbalance the open antagonisms resulting from the struggle for women. The clan structure is too solid and too powerful to yield any of its influence to a larger social institution.

As will be seen later, polygyny is possible under present conditions

8: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1954
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with other adjacent groups. On the border line between western and eastern Arnhem Land there are tribes affiliated with the eastern people, but retaining their own distinct cultural pattern. Apart from the linguistic variations between the eastern and western groups, and the tribal organisation of the one and the clan-linguistic group set-up of the other, the principal difference lies in the eastern form of mainly patrilineal descent and the western pattern of descent through the mother.

The moiety is the most important feature in the social organisation of the Wulamba people of the east and south-east. It serves to classify under these two main headings all clans and linguistic groups, the known universe, and the whole life of the people, and affiliates all those belonging to the same moiety. The moieties are exogamous, and are thus the basis upon which marriage rules depend.

In western Arnhem Land we find the moiety-phratry arrangement (related to the totem) now influenced from the south by the subsection system, which is widely spread throughout Aboriginal Australia. Another feature here is the *namanamaidj*, which establishes a child's affinity with his father's group. This, together with tribal and linguistic membership, is patrilineal; but the descent of the moiety, phratry (and totem), and subsection, is matrilineal.

In eastern Arnhem Land the subsections have not yet been fully co-ordinated with the kinship structure, and many of the older people do not use them. Normally, however, the subsections are based on a system of marriage and descent, and are essentially a matter of kinship organisation. They group various relatives together under one term, in such a way that for general purposes all kinship terms are reduced to eight; and since there are eight divisions in this subsection system, four belong to one moiety, and four to the other.[1]

The eastern Arnhem Landers possess certain fundamental features in common with most other Australian Aboriginal communities. Away from European settlements, for instance, they are hunters and collectors who must forage for their food. On the northern and eastern coast of Arnhem Land food is certainly abundant and varied, but its constant supply depends on the

Kinship is very important in Australia and is the chief factor underlying social organisation and behaviour both between individuals and between groups. Every individual is born into a kinship pattern which under the classificatory system defines his relationship not only with his own kin but also with all those whom he meets during the ordinary course of his life. Kinship terms, or terms of relationship, are used in place of personal names. They are not mere terms of address, for each carries a set pattern of behaviour. 602

Mälla, in literal translation, any *group*, but used also in a special sense for an aggregation of clans linked together by the possession of common totems or by the sharing of at least a part of a common totemic inheritance. 614 615

Moiety (see dual division).

Patrilineal. Descent in clan and in certain other social groups is traced either in the male or in the female line, i.e. through the father or through the mother. When reckoned through the father it is *patrilineal* and when traced through the mother it is said to be *matrilineal*. 000

Totems and totemism. A totem has been defined as an animal, plant or inanimate object, with which a person, or a group of people, believe that they have a special relationship. This is true, but it does not go far enough. Many different kinds of totemism are known in Australia, including clan, moiety, conceptional, personal, cult and ceremonial totemism. In all, a very special relationship exists between the individual or the group and its totem or totems. Often, in clan totemism, the people believe that they are descended from one of the totemic ancestors of their clan and that these ancestors, called *wägarr in* Eastern Arnhem Land, founded the clan and its culture and way of life and established the traditions which the people follow today. 779

Tribe. In Australia the tribe is merely a linguistic unit, a group of people often very loosely united by the possession of a common language, and whose component clans occupy a certain definite territory. It is certainly not the most important unit of social life. It is not the land-owning group, the law-making or war-making group and has no political autonomy. Tribal organisation is conspicuous by its absence from most of Eastern Arnhem Land, although normal tribal organisation occurs at Groote Eylandt, at Bennet Bay and on the southern boundary of the territory, along the Roper River, as well as from the vicinity of Cape Stewart westwards. [197] 619 [184]